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Rep. Akin Supports Split Contract for Joint Strike Fighter
Congressman sends letter to Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld urging split buy

Washington, D.C.- On September 21, Congressman Todd Akin sent a letter to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld recommending a split procurement rather than a winner-take-all award of the Joint Strike Fighter contract for two reasons. Akin stated that a split procurement is feasible because of the large number of aircraft to be produced, and that a split buy is imperative in maintaining a healthy fighter industrial base.

A decision by Defense Department officials is expected next month.

"Many of the senior Defense Department officials involved in the JSF contract award are supportive of a joint procurement plan," stated Akin. "They recognize the importance of maintaining a healthy fighter industrial base."

"The first question is whether to split the contract or not," said Akin. "The second question, if the decision is to split the contract, is how to divide the contract between both contractor teams. That's what some officials are wrestling with now."

The following are exerpts from the letter to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld:

"The announced structure of the award causes me great concern for several reasons. First, our defense aerospace industry has consolidated to the point where only two contractors possess the ability to design and manufacture a fifth-generation fighter at a competitive price. It is essential that we retain at least the competitive level we have at present for the sake of value, innovation and the need for alternatives should one contractor experience significant difficulties. …

"…The size of this contract suggests that a split procurement is entirely feasible. If U.S. and foreign military contracts resulted in production of 5,000 aircraft over the life of the program, each firm would produce 100 aircraft per year for 25 years, certainly large enough to allow for two highly efficient manufacturing and assembly operations."